

Philosophy (PL)

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Philosophy helps us understand ideas that have profoundly influenced world civilizations; develop an outlook on life that is broad, coherent, and reflective; and deal with ideas logically and critically. Every educated person needs at least a basic understanding of philosophy, since it serves as a framework for all knowledge. At Jesuit schools, philosophy has always had a special place; indeed, the Jesuit order was founded by a group of philosophy students led by St. Ignatius of Loyola, who completed an M.A. in philosophy. A strong background in philosophy is a mark of those educated in Jesuit institutions.

The University Core requirement in philosophy consists of three courses: PL 101, an introduction to philosophy; a 200-level course on some period of, or problem in, the history of philosophy; and a 300-level course chosen from a variety of philosophical topics. PL 101 must be taken first, but the 200-level and 300-level courses may be taken in either order. Since philosophy is rarely taught in high school, PL 101 is needed to introduce the nature of philosophical thinking and the skills required for further in-depth studies. The history of philosophy courses explore specific historical periods, approaches, and movements. They focus on a related group of thinkers (such as existentialist, ancient Greek, or African) and their worldviews. They also emphasize how ideas develop over time, how historical context affects us, and how different thinkers interact. The 300-level courses investigate philosophical questions that emerge from other disciplines. They focus on questions such as “Is there a God?,” “How are scientific theories established?,” or “What is the moral status of specific business, scientific, or social practices?”

A philosophy major prepares students for graduate work leading to college teaching, or for professional schools in areas such as law, medicine, religion, and social service. A philosophy major also is a solid basis for any broad program of humanistic studies. A minor in philosophy can complement other areas of study that raise questions about values or methodology, including law, business, education, and the sciences.

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Major and Minor Requirements

Major in Philosophy. 36 credit hours (27 beyond Division V Core requirements): PL 101; two seminars (PL 450), or one seminar and a senior thesis (PL 495); and nine additional courses with at least four on the 200 level and at least four on the 300 level.

Borromeo Institute Major in Philosophy. 36 credit hours: PL 101, 240, 246, 301, 304, 308, 368, 387, 395, 396; one course chosen from PL 210, 220, 260, 270, 275. Either one seminar (PL 450) or a senior thesis (PL 495).

Minor in Philosophy. 18 credit hours (9 beyond Division V Core requirements): PL 101, a 200-level course, a 300-level course, PL 450, and two electives.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY. Discovery of the world of philosophy. Since students are taught by a philosophically diverse group of scholars in PL 101, they will bring a rich array of viewpoints and arguments to their 200 and 300-level courses.

101. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Introduction to the central problems and methods of philosophy through the critical examination of texts of major philosophers. Emphasis is placed on developing skills for reading and writing philosophy.

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY. Explores specific periods, approaches, and movements.

210. ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Ancient Greek philosophical thought, with major emphasis on the works of Plato and Aristotle.

215. AUGUSTINE AND LATE ANTIQUITY 3 cr. Philosophical thought from Aristotle through Augustine, focusing on Epicureanism, Stoicism, Skepticism, Cynicism, and neo-Platonism.

220. MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Medieval philosophy, including the thought of Augustine, Aquinas, and other major figures.

230. CHRISTIAN THINKERS 3 cr. Philosophical problems raised by selected Christian writers, both classical and contemporary.

240. 17th AND 18th-CENTURY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. History of early modern philosophy with special attention given to the beginnings of modern science and its impact on Western ideas about nature, knowledge, mind, and God. Readings include selections from Descartes to Kant.

245. 19th-CENTURY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Study of some of the major figures of the nineteenth century from Fichte through Nietzsche.

246. 20th-CENTURY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Study of some major movements and figures of the period, such as German Idealism, dialectical materialism, atheistic

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humanism, positivism, pragmatism, existentialism, and phenomenology. Offered at Borromeo Institute.

250. CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Key figures in the development of continental thought from Husserl to Derrida.

255. MARXISM AND CRITICAL THEORY 3 cr. Main philosophical and political-economic ideas of Karl Marx, and their reinterpretation by members of the twentieth-century “Frankfurt School.”

260. AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. History of American philosophy as it develops as an ethnophilosophy and through the works of key figures of such trends as Puritanism, Enlightenment, transcendentalism, and pragmatism.

265. EXISTENTIALISM AND PHENOMENOLOGY 3 cr. Main figures in the existential and phenomenological movements, such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Marcel.

270. ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Study of some of the leading figures in British and American analytic philosophy, including Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, and Quine.

275. RECENT AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Exploration of themes and problems in philosophy since 1950, including an investigation of the very nature and definition of the philosophical enterprise. May include readings from analytic, continental, post-modern, and neo-pragmatist philosophers.

280. MAJOR MORAL PHILOSOPHERS 3 cr. Some of the most important contributions of philosophers to an understanding of the nature of morality and ethical reasoning. Readings of classic works in moral philosophy from the Greeks to the present.

285. AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Examination of the development, definition, and status of African philosophy, exploring both its unique cultural heritage and its relationship to themes of Western philosophy.

289. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY 3 cr. Nature and function of the state, the grounds of political obligation, and such related concepts as liberty, equality, and justice through an examination of major political thinkers in their historical context.

290. MAJOR WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS 3 cr. Study of the philosophical contributions of women philosophers from ancient times to the present.

298. SPECIAL TOPICS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY 1-3 cr. Topics will be listed in the semester schedule.

PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS. Integrates understanding of philosophy with other disciplines.

301. INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC 3 cr. Study of modern formal logic and its use in appraising the correctness of reasoning. Covers areas such as syllogisms, propositional logic, basic quantificational logic, basic modal logic, formal proofs, and informal fallacies. Not open to students with credit in PL 360.

302. INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS 3 cr. Investigation into the basic principles of morality and into the nature and methodology of moral judgments. Not open to students with credit in PL 280 or PL 368.

303. PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE 3 cr. Implications of linguistic experience beginning with a survey of the main historical approaches to the meaning of language. Consideration of

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special problems such as sense and reference; thought and language; sign, symbol, and metaphor; linguistics and logic.

304. PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN PERSON 3 cr. Philosophical reflection on some fundamental and enduring questions about human beings and their relationship to the universe. Includes readings from classical and contemporary sources. Offered at Borromeo Institute.

305. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION 3 cr. Philosophical problems in education, such as the nature of knowledge, ways of learning, ethical issues in teaching, and the social-political dimensions of education.

306. PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE 3 cr. Consideration of the nature and meaning of philosophy and literature followed by the study of concepts and issues such as person, freedom and responsibility, good and evil, and intersubjectivity in specific works of literature.

307. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 3 cr. Philosophical problems of religion, such as the nature and ground of religious beliefs, the nature of religious experience, the relation of religion and science, the existence of God, immortality, and evil.

308. PHILOSOPHY OF GOD 3 cr. Exploration of the existence and attributes of God as knowable by reason alone. Includes discussion of religious experience, the relationship of faith and reason, and the problem of evil. Offered at Borromeo Institute.

310. CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL PROBLEMS 3 cr. Some of the most pressing moral problems of today, with special attention to the philosophical issues involved.

311. BUSINESS ETHICS 3 cr. Prerequisites: EC 201-202. Application of ethical concepts to significant problems of business practice.

312. ETHICS IN SPORT 3 cr. Study of key ethical issues that arise in sports, starting with the fundamental concepts in sport philosophy and concluding with specific problems such as sportsmanship, gamesmanship, the nature of competition, and race and gender equality.

314. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ETHICS 3 cr. Examination of the nature of science and technology. Particular emphasis on ethical problems raised by science and technology. Designed for students not planning to take PL 375.

315. APPLIED ETHICS 3 cr. Different topics involving the application of ethical concepts to specialized areas such as medicine, biology, the environment, and law. Course subject will be listed in the semester schedule.

320. PHILOSOPHY OF LAW 3 cr. Exploration of theories concerning the nature of law. Special emphasis on the distinction between law and coercion and the relationship between law and morality. Elements of legal reasoning in case law, statutory interpretation, and constitutional adjudication will be discussed in addition to some fundamental aspects of legal liability.

330. FEMINIST PHILOSOPHIES 3 cr. Examination of philosophical perspectives on the definition, roles, and nature of women. Readings from classic works in the history of philosophy and from contemporary feminist philosophers.

340. PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY 3 cr. Some philosophical problems of history and historical knowledge, such as “the meaning of history” and the nature of historical explanation.

350. PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY AND ART 3 cr. Philosophical investigation of beauty and some questions raised by works of art, such as what is a work of art and what are the nature and ground of aesthetic judgments.

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360. SYMBOLIC LOGIC 3 cr. Study of modern formal logic and its use in appraising the correctness of reasoning. Covers at least propositional and quantificational logic (with relations and identity). May also cover areas such as modal logic, deontic logic, belief logic, soundness and completeness, deviant logic, and the history of logic. This is a more advanced introduction to logic than PL 301; while most students who take PL 360 have had no previous study of logic, some find PL 301 to be a good preparation.

368. ETHICAL THEORY 3 cr. Detailed examination of some of the major philosophical theories about the nature and justification of moral principles of rightness, obligation, and value. Special emphasis is given to the contemporary developments of such theories.

370. PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL CLASS 3 cr. Philosophical investigation of social class distinctions, focusing on their structural, moral, and psychological ramifications.

375. PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE 3 cr. Major philosophical problems raised by science: the nature of scientific inference, the structure of scientific theories, causality, explanation, scientific change, and the role of values in science.

379. PHILOSOPHY OF MIND 3 cr. The nature of mind and its role in our understanding of persons and their actions. Topics include the mind-body problem, artificial intelligence, consciousness, animal minds, personal identity, and free will.

380. PHILOSOPHY AND LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE 3 cr. Exploration of several philosophical and literary approaches to the notions of “self” and “other,” emphasizing subjectivity and personhood, in the works of canonical philosophers and Latin American authors.

385. PHILOSOPHY AND THE BODY 3 cr. Investigation of the different ways in which classic and contemporary philosophers and theorists have analyzed human embodiment.

387. PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE 3 cr. The philosophical principles of nature, including finality, change, time, and the nature of life. Includes discussion of the relationship of natural philosophy to natural science and theology. Offered at Borromeo Institute.

390. PHILOSOPHY OF RACE AND RACISM 3 cr. Study of classical and contemporary formulations of the concept of race, the nature of modern and contemporary racism, and contemporary constructions and experiences of racial identity in the U.S.

395. METAPHYSICS 3 cr. Attempt to understand what kinds of things there are in the world through the question of Being and related concepts of existence, thing, property, event, matter, mind, space, time, and causality.

396. THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE 3 cr. Examination of the nature and sources of knowledge and the means for establishing knowledge claims. Readings from classic works and contemporary writers.

398. SPECIAL TOPICS 1-3 cr. Course subject will be listed in the semester schedule.

ADVANCED COURSES. Designed for majors and minors.

425. PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN PERSON 3 cr. Philosophical reflection on some fundamental and enduring questions about human beings and their relationship to the universe. Includes readings from classical and contemporary sources. Offered at Borromeo Institute.

450. SEMINAR 3 cr. Specific questions on important topics or philosophers. Course subject will be listed in the semester schedule.

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495. SENIOR THESIS 3 cr. Prerequisite: permission of instructor and chair. Individual research project developed and written in consultation with appropriate faculty member. Ordinarily, topic approval will be secured during the spring semester of the student's junior year, and the thesis will be written during the fall semester of senior year. (Student may be required to complete additional preparatory work.)

499. DIRECTED READINGS 1-3 cr. Individual assignment and guidance in source materials relating to specific philosophical problems. A maximum of 3 hours can be used to satisfy major requirements.